



# SKYWATCH

## Spotter Newsletter

NOAA National Weather Service  
Pendleton, OR

newsletter also available at:  
[www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton/spotters/spotterindex.html](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton/spotters/spotterindex.html)

### Spring 2004

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### Spring Spotter "Highlight"

Beginning this spring, and happening twice a year, one of you spotters will be chosen as the spotter highlight. This selection will let other spotters know who you are, and showcase the excellent service you provide to your friends and neighbors across Washington and Oregon. The highlighted spotter for spring '04 is Charlene and Walt Davis of Meacham, OR.

#### **Meacham Lake Weather Spotters** by Charlene Davis, Umatilla-23H

Back In the fall of 1995, Walt and I, Charlene, became official spotters for the National Weather Service. We started keeping an accurate account of the weather in our area and reporting to the National Weather service. When we started looking back, its hard to remember what all took place to get us started in this fun and rewarding hobby. This will be our ninth year. A neighbor, Pete Eves, had kept weather records here at Meacham Lake for many years and he got Walt interested in setting up a weather station and helped him with information on where to get official weather instruments. We have a full weather station, with The Davis Weather Monitor 11. Alan Polan, a forecaster with the NWS, also helped us improve it.



We eventually took the spotters classes offered by the NWS that Robert Doherty was giving. So on September 19, 1995 we became official spotters. It was very exciting when the weather service would call us and ask us for weather reports, they really trusted us and that was neat. We began to take more classes to improve our education and learn what we could do to help make better reports. It has been very fun and educational and since we are now advanced Weather Spotters it is even better! In the spring of 1996 we started studying for our Amateur Radio license and both became hams in 1996. Alan Polan, who was also a ham, encouraged us and other hams to become spotters. Then he helped us activate a weather net for tracking severe weather warnings during storms in our area.

Doing something to help others is rewarding, but on a personal note, I want to tell you how this may have saved our lives and definitely saved our home. One night I was installing a printer on my computer and it was snowing hard. I had already made a couple of reports on the snow depth to the weather service, It was about 10:40 PM, I went to the door to take a measurement and seen our new shop was on fire. My phones were out, but my ham radio was working and I called for help. A local ham Margo Herd called for help and The Meacham Volunteer fire dept. saved our home. If I had not gone to measure the snow, I may not have noticed the shop burning which was only about 40 feet from our Cabin. The cabin could have caught fire and burned us up before we could get out. So we are thankful we check the snow depth for the Weather Service. Had a total of 18 inches of snow on the ground that night with about 5 inches during the fire. ! 1.81 Moisture!

I would also like to say I have been treated with much respect every time I call in a report. They also call here often and we feel we are an important part of the system. It is nice to be a part of such an important service for our community! (Photo Courtesy Charlene/Walt Davis)

## Spotter Training Dates: Spring 2004

Date:	Time:	Place:	County:
4/1	7 PM	Dayton–Port of Columbia #1 Port Way	Columbia, WA
4/5	6:30 PM	Troy–School	Wallowa, OR
4/6	7 PM	Pasco–Franklin PUD 1411 W Clark St.	Benton/Franklin, WA
4/12	7 PM	Heppner–Emergency Operations Center	Morrow, OR
4/14	7 PM	Cle Elum–Upper Kittitas County Senior Ctr. 719 E. 3rd	Kittitas, WA
4/15	7 PM	Yakima–North First Street Conference Room	Yakima, WA
4/19	7 PM	Moro–Fire Station	Sherman, OR
4/20	7 PM	Condon–Courtroom	Gilliam, OR
4/22	7 PM	Goldendale–Klickitat PUD	Klickitat, WA
4/26	7 PM	John Day–High School Library	Grant, OR
4/27	7 PM	Prineville–Library	Crook, OR
4/27	7 PM	Walla Walla–Health Dept. 310 W Poplar-Rear Entrance	Walla Walla, WA
4/28	7 PM	Hermiston–Library 235 E Gladys	Umatilla, OR
4/28	7 PM	Madras–Health Dept.	Jefferson, OR
4/29	7 PM	Bend–Senior Center	Deschutes, OR
5/24	7 PM	The Dalles–Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue	Wasco, OR
5/25	7 PM	Fossil–Fair Office	Wheeler, OR

## Surfers Wanted:

*Are you a weather weeny? Do you like to “surf” the internet?? If you’ve answered yes, please feel free to check out the cool weather links below...*

- [www.wrh.noaa.gov/Pendleton](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Pendleton) Our office site
- [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) Country-wide forecasts
- [www.met.utah.edu](http://www.met.utah.edu) Utah Mesonet
- [www.spc.noaa.gov](http://www.spc.noaa.gov) Storm Prediction Center
- [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov) Hurricane Center
- [www.nssl.noaa.gov](http://www.nssl.noaa.gov) Severe Storms Lab
- [www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov) Fire information
- [www.ncdc.noaa.gov](http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov) Climate Data
- [www.nwrfc.noaa.gov](http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov) NW River Fcst. Center
- [www.drought.unl.edu](http://www.drought.unl.edu) Drought Monitor

## On The Road Again....

Year after year one of the biggest challenges of managing a database full of hundreds of weather spotters is keeping track of where everyone is going. It is inevitable that things like phone numbers and addresses will change for some of you.

In order to keep our data and information accurate and to keep you informed, we need the most current information possible. Unfortunately, if we find your information has changed and are unable to locate you, you may be unable to provide your data to us.

Please inform us of address/phone changes if you want to continue as a weather spotter. We hope you enjoy being a spotter, and that you realize how important you are to keeping our region informed and safe!

To pass along moving information please contact:

Dennis Hull or Mike Cantin

(541) 276-4493 email: [dennis.hull@noaa.gov](mailto:dennis.hull@noaa.gov)  
[michael.cantin@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.cantin@noaa.gov)

## NOAA NWS Open House...

June 12th (10am - 3pm)  
 2001 NW 56th Drive, Pendleton, OR

**Held in conjunction with the Pendleton Airshow.**

For more information: **Open House:** [www.wrh.noaa.gov/Pendleton](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/Pendleton)  
**Airshow:** [www.pendletonairmuseum.org](http://www.pendletonairmuseum.org)

## 2003 in Review By Marilyn Lohman

After an extremely dry summer, more normal precipitation was seen across the region through the fall. Above normal precipitation during December pushed yearly precipitation totals for most locations near normal or above normal. Central Oregon continues to be below normal with only 60 to 80 percent of normal precipitation for the year 2003. Listed below are selected locations yearly precipitation and percent of normal.

<i>Oregon</i>	<i>2003 Pcpn</i>	<i>Percent of Normal</i>	<i>Washington</i>	<i>2003 Pcpn</i>	<i>Percent of normal</i>
Bend	9.31	66%	Connell 12SE	9.51	97%
Boardman	8.71	109%	Dayton 1WSW	19.83	112%
Condon	16.99	116%	Glenwood #2	31.27	112%
Heppner	14.42	101%	Goldendale	17.05	112%
John Day (city)	11.75	96%	Kennewick	6.86	97%
Joseph	18.89	147%	Whitman Mission	15.55	119%
Madras 2N	10.82	74%	Yakima #2	7.27	102%
Mitchell 2ENE	12.96	99%			
Monument #2	13.83	97%			
Moro	9.83	86%			
Pendleton Exp Stn	17.04	104%			
The Dalles	16.63	109%			
Union Exp Stn	17.62	136%			
Wickiup Dam	15.63	70%			

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More information available at:  
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### HIGH WINDS AND SEVERE WINTER WEATHER STRIKE REGION By Jeremy Wolf

The autumn and winter seasons were active ones for the Pacific Northwest. A couple strong cold fronts ushered in high winds to the area during the autumn months. Severe winter weather struck all of the region from late December through most of January.

A couple of strong pacific cold fronts moved through eastern Washington and eastern Oregon this autumn. The first occurred on October 28th, and the second on November 19th. On October 28th, high winds kicked up excessive amounts of dust in the Columbia Basin and Blue Mountain Foothills. On November 19th, Ellensburg winds went from south at 6 MPH out ahead of the cold front, to northwest at 47 MPH with gusts to 60 MPH behind the cold front, all in a span of 30 minutes.

Heavy snowfall as well as freezing rain was common amongst the region from late December through most of January. The first big snowstorm occurred on December 28th and 29th and affected mainly central and northern portions of Oregon, with several locations picking up between 8 – 14 inches of snow. The next big winter storm occurred just three days later on New Years Day. This one affected mainly central and north central Oregon, the Blue Mountain Foothills, as well as south central Washington. Sisters picked up 11 inches of snow, and brief blizzard conditions were experienced in the Blue Mountain Foothills. Five days later on January 6th, interstate 84 was shut down in the Grande Ronde Valley due to blizzard conditions. Tri-Cities picked up an additional 8 inches of snow on this day, with a total snow depth of around a foot. On January 23rd and 24th, an ice storm in the Blue Mountains resulted in ice accumulations of one inch at Meacham and Emigrant Springs. A big thanks goes out to everyone from National Weather Service Pendleton for your help in sending us critical weather reports during these active autumn and winter seasons.

### 2004 Climate Outlook for Eastern Oregon/Washington By Jon Mittelstadt

The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) seasonal outlooks released in February indicate slightly better than average odds for above normal precipitation across eastern OR/WA for late Spring and early Summer (April, May and June). They also predict slightly better than average odds of warmer than average temperatures for late Summer into early Fall (July, August and September). These two seasonal forecasts are based on ten-year trends and on a statistical model that measures how global and U.S. temperature and precipitation patterns have evolved over the last year. For precipitation and temperature outlooks for other periods in 2004, CPC says there are equal odds for conditions occurring below or above average.

One reason for these "equal odds" forecasts is that El Nino has been in a "neutral state" this winter and is expected to stay neutral through at least Spring. In its neutral state El Nino has little impact on the Pacific Northwest, forcing climate forecasters to rely on other, less accurate, tools.

## Forecast office "Open House" ...Come One Come All

**What:** Office tour, exhibits, refreshments, everyone is invited!

**Questions??:** Dennis Hull

**Where:** 2001 NW 56th Drive Pendleton, OR 97801

(541) 276-4493

**When:** June 12th (10am - 3pm)

dennis.hull@noaa.gov

This NOAA NWS open house will be held in conjunction with the Pendleton Air Show. More info. on the open house is available at [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton), and airshow at [www.pendletonairmuseum.org](http://www.pendletonairmuseum.org)

### ***Pendleton Skywarn is Online!***

By Brandon Coughlin, KA7BPR, Benton-11H



Over the past few months, I have been working with the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) and Skywarn Net Coordinators from around the region to create a website for the Pendleton Skywarn program. In January of this year, the website finally came online and has continued to evolve, with help from the spotters, into a valuable resource. The website serves Skywarn amateur radio spotters by providing important information regarding Skywarn Nets that are organized within the Pendleton Office's County Warning and Forecast Area. This area consists of 19 Counties east of the Cascades in Southern Washington and Northern Oregon. Each County will have its own information page that provides repeaters listings, Skywarn news and Net schedules for that County. Currently, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties in Washington and Deschutes, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa Counties in Oregon are available on the website. You can find the website at [www.skywarn-pdt.org](http://www.skywarn-pdt.org).

**Get Involved!** While weather radar can sometimes "hint" at the conditions that are favorable for severe weather, they can't ever confirm that those conditions actually exist on the ground. That is why it's important for weather spotters to be active in their communities. Every spotter is a valuable part of the Skywarn network. If you are an amateur radio operator, it is important to get involved with your local Skywarn Net. To find out if your County has a Skywarn Net, you can visit the new Pendleton Skywarn website at [www.skywarn-pdt.org](http://www.skywarn-pdt.org) and lookup your County, or, you can contact Alan Polan, KE4TRR, at 541-276-4493 or via e-mail at [Alan.Polan@noaa.gov](mailto:Alan.Polan@noaa.gov) for more information. Alan is the amateur radio program leader for the Pendleton NOAA NWS office. If you don't have a Skywarn Net organized in your area, consider joining forces with a few of your fellow hams and take the lead by organizing a Net for your area.

**Why Amateur Radio?** Amateur Radio has several advantages over landline or cell phones when it comes to weather spotting. In the event of a serious storm, electricity and phone service could be some of the first casualties. With a handful of batteries, amateur radio operators can get their messages to the NOAA NWS – sometimes even before a person can pick up a phone to dial the number!

If you aren't an amateur radio operator, but are interested in finding out more about getting involved in this exciting hobby, you can find out more by visiting the ARRL website at [www.arrl.org/hamradio.html](http://www.arrl.org/hamradio.html) or by contacting your local ham radio club. It's easier now than ever to get your ham license!

**How Does A Skywarn Net Work?** When the NWS issues a Severe Storm Watch or Warning, the Skywarn Net for the area included in the Watch or Warning may be activated on a local repeater. One station is designated the "Net Control Station", and another is designated as the "Net Logging Station". Net Control works to ensure that the Net is conducted in an orderly fashion. The Logging Station logs and prioritizes all the weather reports that are received over the Net. Reports are prioritized by using what's called a "Priority Matrix". This quickly determines which reports are the most critical for the NWS to receive first. In other words, some reports are more significant than others and need to be relayed immediately. Once the Skywarn Net does all of this work, there is only one person making a single telephone call or radio contact to the NWS.

**All Hams On Deck!** You do not need to be a Certified Skywarn Spotter to participate in the Skywarn Net. Any amateur radio operator can participate in the local Skywarn Nets. It is recommended that you attend the Skywarn Spotter Training Class whenever it is in your area. You learn a lot about identifying different characteristics of a storm and thus how to accurately observe and report storms. You are eligible for door prizes and best of all you get a cool training certificate! You can watch the Pendleton Skywarn website or the NOAA NWS website at [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton) for updates on when a class will be near you.

## Word Scramble by Mary Smith

Correctly unscramble the words below and you might win a prize. Submit your answers by April 30th, and the winner will be announced May 1st (see information below). Hint: Each word is associated with thunderstorms... Doog Kclu! (that is, good luck!!)

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. bmuulcniosmu | 6. ehturnd    |
| 2. lwla dluco   | 7. agvri      |
| 3. glntgihin    | 8. nair fhsat |
| 4. dtofwarnd    | 9. otndaor    |
| 5. aihl         | 10. lvnai     |

Mail in or email in your answers to be entered in a drawing for cool National Weather Service stuff!! Mail: National Weather Service Email: michael.cantin@noaa.gov



c/o Spotter Quiz  
2001 NW 56th Drive  
Pendleton, OR 97801

dennis.hull@noaa.gov

### Reporting Spring/Summer Weather:

Call: 1-541-276-4493

<b>Event:</b> <b>Tornado, Funnel Cloud, Wall Cloud</b>	<b>What to Report:</b> Location, time & direction of movement, duration
<b>Hail</b>	Pea size or larger
<b>Rainfall</b>	½ inch or more over a short duration
<b>Flooding</b>	Any kind including dam failure. Is the water rising or falling?
<b>Wind Damage</b>	Wind speeds of 35mph or higher, any damage

Please remember to call with your report only as soon as it is safe to do so!!

### Thank You!!

It is widely apparent here at the NOAA National Weather Service in Pendleton, and at weather service offices around the United States, that you, as a weather spotter, play a vital role in what we do. You are called on to collect very important information that helps verify and instigate weather watches and warnings. This includes weather data during severe and life threatening situations.

The data you provide allows us to make quick decisions, and alleviates some of the pressure that's part of making critical weather forecasts. You are our eyes and ears around Washington and Oregon. Many of you provide our only data link into less populated areas.

For all of this, and everything else you do, we thank you! Thank you for helping us keep you, your friends, and neighbors informed and safe. You should be proud of the public service you provide, you are instrumental to what we do. **Keep up the great work!**

Pendleton Weather Service Staff

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## Your Regional Spotter News

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